

Many to Many

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“Many to Many” under the aegis of Operation Peace Through Unity is a communicating link between “we, the peoples” of all nations, races, creeds and ideologies offering in the spirit of the preamble of the United Nations Charter an instrument for the furthering of better relationships based on deepening mutual understanding and the aspiration to promote unity and cooperation beyond all differences.

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I. *Indigenoussness*

The world today amply testifies to the truth of the saying that there is nothing hid that shall not be revealed; there is nothing covered up that will remain undisclosed. Fears, resentments, the urge to lash out, to harm and hurt are unleashed at all levels of our world community. We are experiencing the mindless atrocities of humanity against itself. The very fabric of today's societies is torn apart, turning some of us into handwringing commentators or fence-sitting name callers. Beset with fear and despair we search for answers and clues among the rubble but old concepts of rights and wrongs are lost in thick layers of dust. We shall have to look elsewhere for answers and direction.

For centuries indigenous nations and peoples have been the custodians of timeless knowledge. They have felt the intimate relations between all living things and followed the rhythm of seasons. They sense the connectedness of this planet with the seven heavenly sisters and brothers and with the suns beyond the visible sun that sustains all life on earth. And through the rise and fall of many civilisations, the elders have been the custodians of the heavenly 'child' within, which holds the hope and the glory – and the destiny - of this small planet.

Increasingly sophisticated technology has speeded up communication between all and accelerated the globalisation of our world. Multinational corporations are grazing the planet's most productive lands and forests, mountains and seas and consumerism is creating great divides between rich and poor. Globalisation is revealing the face of materialism and its relentless appetite. Materialism rules by its own rules/codes of conduct and binds its 'customers' to itself.

But globalisation also highlights the interconnectedness of life in all its many manifestations; it enables the voice of the individual human being, including that of our Elders, to be heard throughout the world. Today the International Council of Thirteen Grandmothers are travelling far and wide to share their concern for the *'unprecedented destruction of our Mother Earth...the global scourge of poverty and violence globally..'* Grandmother Uinci Rita shares a phrase in Lakota: 'Mitakuye Oyasin' which means 'All My Relations'. All living beings, every creature that lives and breathes with us are our relations, the Grandmothers remind us. (<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/13th-gathering-of-the-grandmothers-council>)

So perhaps globalisation is preparing us for embracing the 'Indigenoussness' of all planetary life including the human species? On the 22-23 September 2014 the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples takes place at the United Nations in New York. Here the prepared *'draft outcome document'* will be adopted by the UN General Assembly. While some member states will endorse this carefully prepared document others may not, but the text agrees that *'indigenous peoples' knowledge and strategies to sustain their environment should be respected'*. It also decides that due consideration will be given *'to the rights of indigenous peoples in the post-2015 development agenda'*, and that these rights will be mainstreamed *'into the development agenda at the national, regional and international levels'*. <http://undesadspd.org/indigenouspeoples/worldconference.aspx>

The Mayan Elders say that the 'dark' will be transformed *'when confronted with simplicity and open-heartedness'*. They urge: *'find your heart and you will find your way'*. The human heart will open the door to our common future; to the fulfilment of our

shared destiny – through Heart the hope and the glory of Earth can unfold and reveal itself through *all* indigenous to It. All that is born into and living upon it.

“Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life. “

Earth Charter

II. World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

On the 22nd September over one thousand indigenous and non-indigenous delegates met at the United Nations, New York, for the first ever World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. It was convened as the first high-level plenary meeting of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly, and at the opening of the Conference UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon acknowledged that the work of the conference will connect deeply with the most critical issues that top the global agenda. Indigenous peoples *‘are deeply connected to Mother Earth – whose future is at the heart of the Climate Summit opening tomorrow’* and *‘your deliberations and decisions will reverberate across the international community’*.

UN General Assembly President, Kutesa pointed to a ‘deep chasm’ between commitments and reality and urged Member States to translate this Outcome Document into reality and *‘demonstrate resolve in addressing inequalities that adversely affect indigenous communities.’* This conference *‘is an opportunity for Member States to engage indigenous peoples in a more strategic and beneficial manner’*. Heartened by the inclusive nature of the preparatory process, which he believes bodes well for the implementation of post-Conference commitments, the President concluded by urging: *‘Member States, inter-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector to make a renewed commitment towards strategic partnership with indigenous peoples to help in their quest for a sustainable future’*.

In her address to the UN General Assembly Ms Dalee Sambo Sorough, Chair of UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, stressed that only such a ‘spirit of solidarity’ will provide the support needed to implement the Outcome Document. Ms. Sorough called on all UN Members States to be guided *‘not only by legal imperatives and international obligations but also by moral imperatives and moral obligations’*.

Throughout this World Conference on Indigenous Peoples the essence and focus had been on Mother Earth and the future of the planet. The indigenous Guatemalan activist, Rigoberta Menchu, said that the issues related to natural resources, territories, seas, rivers are like the soul of indigenous rights; for indigenous peoples this week’s events are a sign of hope towards a *‘a full life and not just survival’*.

At the closing session on the second day the UNGA President Sam Kutesa called the Outcome Document a balance between the collective, inclusive action of the indigenous people and an agreement from the Member States.

The President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD, Mr. Kanayo Nwanze stressed that; *‘Unless we mainstream the rights of indigenous peoples, unless we are serious about their empowerment, unless we work with them as equal*

partners – then any global development agenda we conceive will be a hollow exercise, empty because it will not reach the most disadvantaged”.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, saw the first World Conference as a celebration as well as a call for action: *‘to enhance our combat against the discrimination, exclusion and land-grabs that indigenous peoples still experience in all regions of the world. Action, which demonstrates that our resolve to advance the rights of indigenous peoples is not rhetorical, but real’*. As the High Commissioner shared his hope that the outcome document would constitute *‘stepping stones which will bring out indigenous peoples’ rights to a new level’*, he urged that we must also remember the past and proceeded to share the following story which had moved him deeply:

“Recently I learned about a story that I found very moving. For centuries, an enormous rock that resembled a large, pale buffalo stood by the South Saskatchewan River in Canada. It was a sacred gathering place for indigenous peoples on the vast plains. But in 1966, in order to accommodate the construction of a dam and an artificial lake, that monumental rock was blown apart with dynamite. The waters rose and the jagged, broken pieces were covered in darkness.

But last month, after a patient search, those pieces were found, deep under the waters. Once again, as their ancestors had done for generations, indigenous peoples could touch the remains of the rock and feel through it their connection to their past. The rock could not be reconstituted; its pieces will remain underwater. But the discovery will bring the rock's story to life.” And, said the High Commissioner for Human Rights: *‘Generations to come will know where it is and what it has meant, and continues to mean, to their community.’*

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15086&LangID=E#sthash.8O4IYEZ1.dpuf>

<http://wqip2014.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Adopted-Alta-outcome-document-with-logo-ENG.pdf>

<http://www.ienearth.org/>

III. Climate Summit 23 September 2014

In his opening address to the Climate Summit, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, said that, never had the world faced such a challenge, nor encountered such a great opportunity to *‘set the world on a new course’*. Ban urged all governments to commit to a meaningful, universal climate agreement in Paris in 2015 and together aim to limit global temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius.

At the closing of the meeting Ban Ki-moon commented on the unprecedented number of leaders that had come together to cooperate on the first draft on commitments to action on climate change to be presented in Lima in December 2014. He noted that leaders *‘from all regions and all levels of economic development, advocated for a peak in greenhouse gas emissions before 2020, decisively reduced emissions thereafter, and climate neutrality in the second half of this century.’*

Among the initiatives and commitments from the Summit were:

- A ‘historic commitment’ made by leaders of oil and gas industry, national Governments and civil society organisations to identify and reduce methane emissions by 2020.
- A strong support by leaders for the Green Climate Fund
- The launch of the first Global Agricultural Alliance to enable 500 million farmers worldwide to practice climate-smart agriculture by 2030
- The launch of a comprehensive climate risk resilience initiative to support Pacific Small Island Developing States

The UN Secretary-General concluded by urging that all the pledges and initiatives brought forward today would be fulfilled, and: *“As we walk together on the road to Lima and Paris in December 2014 and 2015, let us look back on today as the day we decided – as a human family – to put our house in order to make it liveable for future generations”*.
<http://newsroom.unfccc.int/unfccc-newsroom/un-climate-summit-ban-ki-moon-final-summary/>
<https://papersmart.unmeetings.org/secretariat/eosg/un-climate-summit-2014/statements/>

The Regional Ministerial Consultation: ‘Monitoring and Accountability for the Post-2015 Development Agenda – The regional Dimension’, organised by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Regional UN Development Group for Europe and Central Asia, took place in Geneva from 15-16 September 2014. The meeting discussed how to give ‘teeth’ to the non-legally binding framework that will be formulating the ambitious transformation agenda towards sustainability for all countries.

There was general agreement that the monitoring and accountability framework should be an integral part of the post-2015 development agenda and not an *‘after-thought’*. Accountability should be understood as a participatory and inclusive process, and have *‘an overall accountability mechanism which will ensure linkages between various levels (local, national, regional, global), actors (state and non-state) and sectors.’*

Governments, as primary duty bearers, are to be held accountable; but accountability must also involve parliaments, organised civil society groups and citizens, the private sector and international organisations.

The importance of the role that the *regional* level, in a multi-layered accountability mechanism, could play was highlighted as providing an important link between national and global levels. There was general agreement that a regional review *‘can build ownership and understanding for the universal nature of the new agenda in the region’*. The regional level also provides a natural platform for addressing transboundary challenges, such as water cooperation or the green economy, promoted through the Environment for Europe process, the Water Convention, or green economy toolbox.

It was stressed that the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) has the responsibility to play the central role in ensuring the coherence of the overall accountability framework and – under the auspices of ECOSOC – conduct meaningful reviews from 2016 onwards and take into account the results of the regional reviews.

<http://www.unece.org/post-2015/regionalministerialconsultation2014.html>

See more at: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/5396#sthash.ZhWo4RtL.dpuf>

“I have been told that the novelist John Steinbeck once asked Dag Hammarskjöld how he could be helpful when he toured the world. Hammarskjöld’s answer was simple. He said, “Sit on the ground and talk to people – that is the most important thing.”

(Ban Ki-moon at ceremony commemorating Dag Hammarskjöld, 16 September 2014)

Global Ecovillage Summit

Ngor, Dakar, Senegal – 10-14 December 2014
- *Connecting Communities for a Sustainable World* –

The Senegalese government has launched a programme to transition 14,000 traditional villages to Ecovillages. The summit aims to bring together governmental decision makers, social entrepreneurs, NGO representatives and others from around the world to share solutions and best practices.

The Ecovillage Summit, hosted by the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and GEN-Africa, will include

- an official opening with governmental representatives from Senegal and surrounding West Africa countries;
- thematic presentations and different workshops;
- discussions regarding Ecovillage transition strategies and new holistic models for sustainable development.

A Community day will include interactive activities with the local population, regenerative solutions in Ecovillage design, economy, culture and participatory design.

GEN-Africa is the African Ecovillage Association, promoting social resilience, environmental protection and restoration of nature through the concept of ecovillages as models for sustainable human settlements. GEN-Africa forms part of GEN International and is an NGO with consultative status at the UN-Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and a partner of UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
<http://www.gen-africa.org/GES2014> - <http://www.gen-africa.org/aboutus>

V. Rights Up Front

The “Report of the Secretary-General’s Internal Review Panel on United Nations Action in Sri Lanka”, the so-called *Petrie Report (2012)*, severely criticised United Nations systemic failure to implement its humanitarian and protection mandates in Sri Lanka. The Rights Up Front plan (December 2013) is the outcome of an intensive period of internal assessment and reflection and puts the protection of human rights at the centre of the UN, in accordance with its Charter.

Rights Up Front outlines 6 action plans:

Action 1: Integrating human rights into the lifeblood of staff, so that they understand what the UN’s mandates and commitments to human rights mean for their Department, Agency, Fund or Program and for them personally.

Action 2: Providing Member States with candid information with respect to peoples at risk of, or subject to, serious violations of international human rights or humanitarian law.

Action 3: Ensuring coherent strategies of action on the ground and leveraging the UN System's capacities in a concerted manner.

Action 4: Adopting at Headquarters a "One-UN approach" to facilitate early coordinated action.

Action 5: Achieving, through better analysis, greater impact in the UN's human rights protection work.

Action 6: Supporting all these activities through an improved system of information management on serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/HRC25.aspx>

*'- human rights violations are often the first tremors on the ground,
that can signal potential larger scale violence -'*

UN Human Rights chief Navi Pillay

VI. International Day of Peace 2014

"The Right of Peoples to Peace"

Each year the United Nations Peace Bell is ringing in the International Day of Peace. The Bell is a gift from the United Nations Association of Japan. It is cast from coins donated by children from most continents and carries the inscription: *"Long Live Absolute World Peace"*.

Each year, at 12 Noon, people around the world gather at midday in prayers, chants and in silence, invoking peace and non-violence for the children of the world. And throughout the day countless gatherings take place, to confirm and strengthen the sense of united resolve to change and transform all relationships for the good of all.

In Whanganui, New Zealand, Peace Through Unity, the local Branch of the United Nations Association, together with other community groups and individuals gathered to explore and deepen our understanding of this year's theme, and how we can bring about closer cooperation within our own community and beyond.

The afternoon meeting opened with prayers and, as each country was named, we asked that peace would prevail within each - and between - all nations. Our three panel speakers spoke to this year's theme, each from their particular perspective:

Restorative Practices (Jenny Saywood)*:

"I am coming to this subject from a restorative justice perspective which is underpinned and explained by relational theory. I make reference to a chapter of a book co-edited by Professor Jennifer LLewellyn called Being relational: Reflections on Relational theory and Health Law.

Amongst many other things Jennifer worked with the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation commission in 1997 and was an expert witness on restorative justice for the West Kingston Commission of Enquiry in 2002. She is a Professor at Dalhousie School of Law in Halifax, Nova Scotia and her teaching and research is focused in the

areas of relational theory, restorative justice, international and domestic human rights law and Canadian constitutional law.

The Restorative Justice movement developed as an approach to account for and address the needs of offenders, victims and communities in the wake of wrong doing. A restorative justice conference occurs when both victim and offender agree to meet. It is not separate from the justice system but runs alongside. It gives the victim a voice and the offender an opportunity to take responsibility for harm caused and the opportunity to put right the harm. Today restorative approaches are available for all sorts of criminal offences and building upon the experience of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, efforts are being made to use the restorative justice framework to situations of mass violence.

The idea for the Restorative city concept here in Wanganui came from the realisation that the theory underlying restorative justice could work in all areas of our life and work and did not have to be confined to the narrow jurisdiction of the justice system. In order for the people of Wanganui to flourish as a community we need to concentrate on our relationships with each other, and relational theory puts this into perspective.

So what is relational theory?

Simply put relational theory is concerned with the nature of the connections between and among people, groups, communities and even nations. Jennifer Llewellyn suggests that connections and relationships with others is essential to understanding the self and it offers a different starting point from which to understand the world. She states that we are all connected whether we choose to be or not but it is the nature of these relationships that we have some choice about. Certain types of connections - oppression and violence or denial of connection through isolation, neglect and abandonment do not provide or permit people 's well being or ability to flourish.

Civil conflicts and wars are generally the result of long standing inequalities and injustices. So from the knowledge of what is destructive and harmful, we are able to identify the basic qualities that are necessary - equal respect, concern and dignity.

The Restorative approach encourages relationships that enable and promote the well being and flourishing of the parties involved. It seeks equality of relationship. Usually when a crime is committed, retributive conceptions of justice are assumed. However what makes a crime wrong is that it damages people, both victims and offenders and destroys communities as it betrays respect and trust which are essential for social relationships. Chris Marshall, Chair in Restorative Justice at Victoria University notes that when one person intentionally injures another, both victim and perpetrator are unavoidably bound together by common experience both connected to the same transgression and aftermath, one bound by guilt and shame, other by bitterness and pain. Both victim and offender need each other to experience liberation and healing. Desmond Tutu writes about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process. - Here the central concern is not retribution or punishment. In the spirit of Ubuntu, the central concern is the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalanced, the restoration of broken relationships a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he has injured by his offence.

The restorative approach has the potential to be democratic in the sense that it strives to ensure that those affected can participate in the processes of decision making about how to do justice in a particular situation. Howard Zehr states that with the Restorative focus

on interpersonal relationships, on human need and on collaborative problem solving processes, it might be viewed as a peacemaking process.

So in a circuitous fashion I have come back to peace. Peace making relates to every sphere of human conflict and the way we do harm to each other.

The Restorative approach is about building social capital and achieving social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making. Social capital is defined as the connection among individuals and the trust, mutual understanding, shared values and behaviours that bind us together and make co-operative action possible. When all these things come together we have a family, a community, a country where people can work together to live in harmony.

The International Cities of Peace initiative in my opinion runs along side the work being done by the Restorative Practices Trust. I would encourage you all to join with us by committing to the principles of a restorative approach within our families, workplaces, our neighbourhoods. The ultimate long term outcome of our vision.”

**** Jenny Saywood:***

I have worked for Probation Service for 23 years and am currently a Service Manager with a team of probation officers managing offenders released from prison. I am the Chair and a founding member of the Whanganui Restorative Justices Trust which has been in existence since 1999. In 2012 we formed the Whanganui Restorative Practices Trust to pursue the idea of a Restorative City.

My father was a Pacifist and a conscientious objector during World War 2 and part of the peace movement for many years and this has influenced my views on finding ways to resolve conflicts peacefully. (SAYWOOD, Jenny (WANGSC (jenny.saywood@corrections.govt.nz))

The Importance of Empathy (Justine Frewen)*:

“I am going to discuss the importance of empathy, and perhaps more accurately, to empathize, in reducing violence and promoting a ‘culture of peace’. Before proceeding I would like to briefly provide you with a few key definitions of the certain critical terms.

By Culture of Peace, I mean an: ‘*integral approach to preventing violence and violent conflicts, and an alternative to the culture of war and violence based on education for peace, the promotion of sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights, equality between women and men, democratic participation, tolerance, the free flow of information and disarmament.*’

With respect to the meaning of empathy, empathy is: ‘*The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.*’ It should not be confused with ‘sympathy’, which is to feel pity or sorrow for someone else’s misfortune.

During my talk today I will first take a couple of short examples of where ‘empathy’ was for the greater part absent. Indeed, it would probably be more accurate to say it was deliberately targeted and destroyed. I will then very briefly summarize how the failure to empathize leads to ‘evil’ by briefly looking at Hannah Arendt’s theory of the ‘Banality of Evil’.

The Planned Absence of Empathy:

With respect to the two examples I will look at - Rwanda and Iraq – I would just like to first emphasize two things:

Firstly, I am only giving a snapshot of very complicated situations, so please understand this. *Secondly*, there are many more extremely relevant examples that could be taken such as the genocides enacted upon Native Americans and Indigenous inhabitants of Australia, the Spanish Civil War, the treatment of refugees, the Viet Nam war, the conflict in Northern Ireland and so forth.

Rwanda

In the early 1990s, Hutu extremists within Rwanda's political elite blamed the entire Tutsi minority population for the country's increasing social, economic, and political pressures. Tutsi civilians were also accused of supporting a Tutsi-dominated rebel group, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which were engaged in a conflict with the Hutu-dominated government from 1990-93. Building upon Hutu memories of past oppressive Tutsi rule, as well as a pre-existing level of resentment and fear of the minority Tutsis, a focused propaganda campaign was implemented to dehumanize Tutsis in Rwanda.

While the ostensible spark for the onset of the genocide was the shooting down of the Hutu President Habyarimana's plane the deliberate breakdown of any form of empathy between the ethnic groups was what led to the massacres of Tutsis. In the lead up to the massacre, radio stations and newspapers broadcast hate propaganda, urging people to "weed out the cockroaches" or kill the Tutsis. During the slaughter of Tutsis, the names of those to be killed were read out on radio. Even priests and nuns have been convicted of killing people, including some who sought shelter in churches. In just 100 days in 1994, some 800,000 people of a population of 7 million were slaughtered in Rwanda by ethnic Hutu extremists.

While there was an undoubted history of conflict between the two major ethnic groups dating since the German and Belgian colonial periods – promoted and manipulated by the colonizers to serve their purposes - it is clear that the massacre of the Tutsis was significantly linked to the deliberate breakdown of empathy between the two ethnicities.

Sectarian Conflict in Iraq

From late 2001 to late 2002, I worked in Iraq. I lived and worked in the Kurdish autonomous region in the north of the country. This region had been witness to large scale conflict and turmoil. During the Saddam led Anfal campaign upwards of 80,000 Kurds died in this region. Thousands of boys and men over the age of 15 were taken away from their families and never seen again. As one can imagine there was an understandable high level of distrust in the Kurdish sector with respect to the rest of Iraq. Since the invasion in 2001, there has been a huge increase in violence between the two major communities in the rest of Iraq, namely the Shia and Sunni Arabs. This has got to the stage where relations between the two peoples are virtually non-existent, with widespread ethnic cleansing of both communities. The staggering amount of killings on both sides has been justified by blaming the other community. The hatred and willingness to engage in further atrocities has been increased through the deliberate breakdown of any feelings of empathy between the two communities.

For these reasons, one of the UN programmes we used to run was to try and increase inter-community trust between the Shia and Sunni. In a similar manner, the Islamic State is deliberately employing terror as a means to achieve its objectives in order to ensure that any form of relationship between the two communities or understanding of the other's position is impossible. This approach can only lead to an increasing cycle of all out violence.

Hannah Arendt and the 'Banality of Evil':

Now I would like to turn, albeit briefly, to Hannah Arendt and her theory of the 'banality of evil'.

Arendt attended the Adolf Eichmann trial in Israel in 1961 and produced a five part report for the New Yorker magazine, which led to an extremely acrimonious public dispute among intellectuals and scholars concerning the Holocaust. Central to the conflicts and hostility which arose over Arendt's depiction of Eichmann's trial was her use of the concept "*banality of evil*", which she applied to the manner in which Eichmann had acted in contributing to the slaughter of the Jewish populations of Europe. However, as pointed out by Seyla Benhabib, the use of terminology such as the "banality of evil", did not mean that what Eichmann had helped to perpetrate was banal or that the extermination of the Jews, and of other peoples, by the Nazis was banal: "*The phrase the "banality of evil" was meant to refer to a specific quality of mind and character of the doer himself, but neither to the deeds nor the principles behind those deeds.*"

For Arendt, Eichmann was a quite ordinary individual whose most distinguishing feature was not stupidity, wickedness, or depravity but "thoughtlessness", which resulted in "*his inability to judge in those circumstances where judgment was most needed*". Instead, it was this inability to reflect, to think freely and critically about his situation and deeds and how they impacted upon those whom they affected which served as "the true mark of evil in its contemporary or "totalitarian" form."

In *Thinking and Moral Considerations*, Arendt explained that she was not trying to promulgate some "theory or doctrine but something quite factual", which was the "phenomenon of evil deeds, on a gigantic scale" that could not be traced back to "*any particularity of wickedness, pathology or ideological conviction in the doer, whose only personal conviction was a perhaps extraordinary shallowness.*"

"However, monstrous the deeds were, the doer was neither monstrous nor demonic, and the only specific characteristic one could detect on his part... was something entirely negative: it was not stupidity but a curious, quite authentic inability to think."

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt holds that it is this "*matter of thought, and thoughtlessness – the heedless restlessness or hopeless confusion or complacent repetition of "truths" which have become trivial and empty*" that "*seems to be among the outstanding characteristics of our time.*" This "curious, quite authentic inability to think" left Eichmann unable to think from the "standpoint of somebody else." This lack of empathy for the Jewish people allowed him arrange their death convoys without 'understanding' the horrors he was inflicting upon them.

As Frederick M. Dolan writes: Opinions are based on experience, which shapes and limits the perspective of the possessor. We come to understand the opinions of others when we grasp their point of view. In the realm of human affairs, reality (and so by extension, truth) is multiple.

Therefore in order to try and establish a culture of peace, it is essential that we try to understand the viewpoints of the other. It is critical for us to remember this and to apply this approach to ourselves when trying to understand and mediate or alleviate conflict and bring about true peace. We must avoid the lazy temptation to look at any particular conflict exclusively from our own standpoint– the 'you are either with us or against us' formula - and to try and understand what has given rise to the conflict there by trying to walk in the shoes of our counterparts.

The Violence of Poverty:

I would like to finish by noting that while I have referred above to conflicts where direct physical violence is the norm, these are not the only situations where violence can occur.

There is also the violence of deprivation and another equally extreme form of violence: the humiliation and contempt that denies a person's humanity.

This attitude leads to many types of violence: continual disrespect, humiliation, discrimination, verbal abuse, and denial of basic rights. As one interviewee in the report on "Extreme poverty is violence - Breaking the silence - Searching for peace" by the International Movement All Together in Dignity Fourth World stated: *"Not only did I have nothing, but I was reduced to nothing."*

People are denigrated, stereotyped in stigmatizing categories, or even referred to with dehumanizing language, such as "cases". While this everyday violence is unbearable for the person on the receiving end, it is either invisible to others or considered normal. It is trivialized by those who perpetrate it and those who witness it without reacting.

I would just like to conclude with a few comments by interviewees for this report on the violence they face as a result of being poor:

"When people disrespect us by labeling us with such words as 'welfare case', 'bad mother', 'incapable', 'good for nothing', it reflects judgment and ignorance, and we feel the violence of being discriminated against, of being non-existent, of not being part of the same world, and not being treated like other human beings. This daily violence is a form of abuse."

"As long as I do not know what I can bring home for my children to eat, I cannot say that I am at peace."

"We can start to build peace from the moment that each person feels responsible for the injustice done to others. Because if this injustice is not denounced, peace can never be established in such a world."

* **Justin Frewen** is a United Nations consultant with almost 20 years' experience working on a wide range of development and humanitarian projects in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the U.S. (Jus Frew (cead_milte@yahoo.co.uk))

Promotion of Peaceful Relationships (David James)*:

Speaking of the 'startling set of experiences' and challenges which have been expanding the human horizon, David quoted the astronaut, Boris Volynov, who said: *"Having seen the sun, the stars and our planet, you become more full of life, softer. You begin to look at all living things with greater trepidation and you begin to be more kind and patient with the people around you"*. Out of experiences such as this came the Manifesto 2000 with its six points, formulated by the Nobel Peace Laureates for a peaceful civilisation and signed by people throughout the world:

- Respect all life
- Reject violence
- Share with others
- Listen to understand
- Preserve the planet
- Rediscover solidarity.

But we are living in dark times, nationally as well as internationally, and it can be difficult to envision how the right to peace will be achievable when we consider the many places of unrest throughout the world; *'the fragile ceasefire in Gaza; the UN Security Council with its permanent members including the biggest arms trading nations, the prevalence of huge and powerful multinational corporations, including financial corporations, behaving like old-fashioned empires'*. David reminded us that peace is not simply absence of war or factional violence: our nations and communities are torn apart

by issues ‘such as inequality, child poverty, and tribal politics feeding corruption...’ Unpeaceful attitudes will tend to stereotype the opposition and at worst dehumanize them.

As a Quaker and educator, with speciality in Treaty issues, and someone who has practised and taught mediation and conflict management, David emphasised the importance of ‘*developing a local culture of peaceful relationships*’. Sustainable peacebuilding must focus on local communities, with “*a web of relationship building: from the ground up, inside out and vice versa, as well as middle-out and top-down*” (John Paul Lederach) .

Quoting another Quaker colleague, Adam Curle, peaceful relationships is defined as commitment to ‘*full development of other person or group as to own*’. This means moving beyond negative peace, the absence of physical violence, and instead search for positive peace through overcoming the structural violence of injustice between dominant and exploited groups and between rulers and ruled.

And part of this process is the uncomfortable, but ultimately loving process, of confrontation – ‘rescuing the dominant group from the ill-effects of their assertion of power on themselves, as well as on those they have oppressed’.

David gave us a very local example of such an ‘unpeaceful relationship’ between colonial or ex-colonial authorities and the indigenous peoples, in which the mediation skills of both David himself and his wife Jillian were called up, namely the occupation/reclamation of Pakaitore/Moutoa Gardens, Whanganui, almost 20 years ago. This, said David, is a good example of non-violently confronting structural violence. Many found it disturbing at the time, but relationships have improved locally and nationally through the years.

And out of this process has emerged the recent Whanganui River Settlement which reflects and gives substance to the 6 points of the Manifesto 2000. “*The key objective of this settlement is the health and wellbeing of the complete river system, which relates to respecting all life and preserving the planet. It moves beyond simply rejecting violence into developing peaceful relationships; The requirement to share with others is amply met, and became possible when the Crown let go of its assertion of ownership and so freed the iwi to do the same, and so enable the river to own itself*”.

* **David James:** Born and educated in England, David has lived and worked in Aotearoa New Zealand for the past 53 years. He is a former Director of the National Council of Adult Education, and is a Quaker. Since 1988 he has worked with his wife Jillian Wychel as the Rowan Partnership. Their work in training and practice in Treaty of Waitangi issues, constitutional transformation, conflict management and mediation, is all related to the promotion of peaceful relationships.

VII. Third UN High Level Forum on The Culture of Peace

By Anne Creter, September 30, 2014

Has there ever been a more dire time on the planet for the human condition? World news the morning of 9 September, 2014 was particularly bleak. Approaching United Nations (UN) headquarters early that day for the much anticipated third High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace, I sadly wondered whether there really was any hope for humanity. Yet miraculously by days-end, I came away hopeful again from what turned

out to be a rich, inspiring program hosted by the President of the General Assembly, in cooperation with the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace (www.gmcop.org).

The day long culture of peace fest began with an opening segment from the General Assembly President's Office, highlighted by remarks from beloved Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, followed with Liberian Nobel Laureate Leyman Gbowee's rousing keynote. A musical interlude of African drums then punctuated the Member States High Level Segment General Debate, a new feature added this year that enhanced the Forum's significance. Ambassadors from 10 countries (Philippines, United States, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Qatar, Cuba, Butan, Kazakstan, Sri Lanka and Romania) poignantly shared their remarks on what the culture of peace means to them.

The two afternoon panels focused on the role of "Women and Youth" plus "Global Citizenship" as pathways to the culture of peace. Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury moderated the stimulating "Women and Youth" panel with panelists Ms. Lakshmi Puri (UN Women); Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi (UN Envoy on Youth); Ms. Sanam Anderlini (International Civil Society Action Network); and Mr. Oliver Rizzi Carlson (UN Representative to Young Peacebuilders plus our own Operation Peace Through Unity). Honduras Ambassador Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Flores Flake moderated the second thought-provoking "Global Citizenship" panel featuring renowned culture of peace pioneer Mr. Federico Mayor (Former UNESCO Director); Ms. Dot Maver (National Peace Academy); Mr. Douglas Roche (Author "Right to Peace", Diplomat); Ms. Vibeke Jensen (UNESCO) and Mr. Mohammed Abu-Nimer (King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue). Bangladesh Ambassador A.K. Abdul Momen then concluded by leading a closing session that nicely integrated all the day's vast discourse.

Following are some points that resonated with me:

Ban Ki Moon: *We join forces here to promote the culture of peace and yet all around us we see a spreading virus of war -- of conflict, extremism, violence, hatred and terrorism. But I am convinced that our strongest arsenal in the face of these threats is not weapons or missiles or guns. It is our shared values, our common vision for peace, development and human rights; our universal aspiration for a meaningful culture of peace.*

Leymah Gbowee: *Where are we missing it? Why does conflict continue to come back to us? What are we doing that makes it so difficult? Will children in war torn countries ever experience a culture of peace? No! It is high time leaders do business differently ... Until then the culture of peace will remain a mist... The bigger the guns the smaller the intellect ... In the 5 UN permanent member states, where is Africa? The culture of peace is achievable if we do it right.*

Federico Mayor: *"We the people" as global citizens now -- not "we the states" -- must decide to end the culture of war ...the Declaration of Human Rights talks of freeing humanity from fear ...of the equal dignity of all human beings and that the world must be guided by democratic principles... the new paradigm of world citizenship, not visible before, enables us to know the world now through digital access ... which makes us responsible to move from force to rapprochement.*

Dot Maver: *Global citizenship is about shifting from "me" to "we". Peacebuilding is a way of life, an inside job and group endeavor. It is goodwill love in action ... having social, emotional relationship skills in meeting human needs. Since energy follows*

thought, today's intense in-depth high level focus at the UN is itself powerfully invocative of the culture of peace.

It has been said that the “power of three” is the right number for persuasion. Thus, this THIRD High Level Forum must indeed be a milestone in anchoring the notion of culture of peace more firmly into human consciousness. Especially because it marks the 15th anniversary of passage of the landmark UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243), the precedent-setting UN Resolution upon which the Forum was based. Ban Ki Moon noted in kicking off the day that this evolutionary culture of peace concept was actually born 25 years ago at the UNESCO-supported International Congress of Peace in Yamoussoukro. Put in perspective, it took 10 years from that point before it was ever formalized into a norm-setting UN Resolution, then 12 more years before the advent of any High Level Forum about it in 2012. Prior to that time, the term was hardly ever mentioned at the UN in high circles, much less known or understood.

It is heartening how much recent progress has been made grasping the comprehensive, transformational scope of what culture of peace means. For how can it manifest until it is truly understood? This Forum was an essential global conversation among diplomats and civil society alike, conducted in the one true house of humanity, to better understand culture of peace -- for its ultimate manifestation. I cannot think of a more critical dialogue to be having at this time of such worldwide peril or a better place on earth than at the UN for it to be happening! You can experience it too by visiting the UN WebTV archives for 9 September 2014 at <http://webtv.un.org/>

VIII. The Great Invocation

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men –
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the plan on Earth.